

Deaf cinema-goers want their voices to be heard

By **MERYL NAIDOO**

TASMANIAN disability advocates want all Australian films to be captioned for deaf viewers.

Rebecca Moir, 24, of Risdon Vale, who was born with profound hearing loss, says it is discrimination that deaf cinema patrons cannot enjoy films like everyone else.

Less than 3 per cent of all screenings at public cinemas are accessible to people who are deaf, hearing-impaired, blind or vision impaired.

Tasdef CEO Grant Roberts said this is not good enough.

"People want to go to the cinema with friends or family at convenient times," he said.

"We all expect the freedom of choice, spontaneity, convenience and flexibility when

we go to the cinema and people with sensory disabilities are being excluded from enjoying films that everyone else in the community can enjoy."

When Ms Moir takes her five-year-old daughter Shaila to the movies her experience is "boring" with no dialogue.

"At least with DVDs there are always captions," she said. Tasmania's Village Cinemas screen three captioned sessions a week - on popular Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons as well as Wednesday mornings.

Tasmanian Village Cinema group manager Vanetta DeAngelis will meet with Tasdeaf to discuss the chance of increased captioning sessions for deaf and hearing-impaired people on Wednesday.

"We are open to help anyone

to improve people's cinema experience," she said.

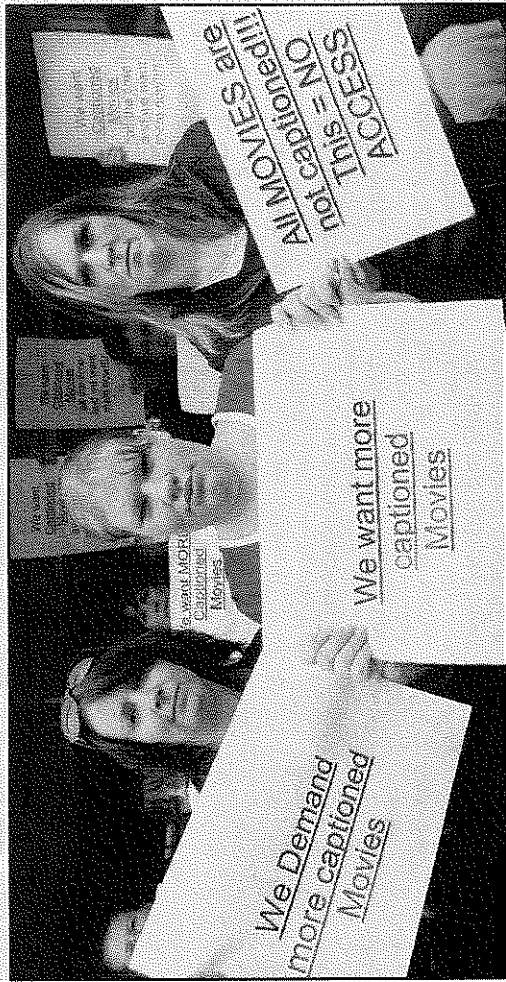
"We encourage people to talk to us about their needs."

She said Village tried to caption the most popular releases.

Community protests were held in all capital cities - including outside Hobart's Village cinemas - yesterday over the lack of cinema access for deaf and blind.

Mr Roberts said hearing and sighted Australians have the choice of going to any cinema, any movie and any session but deaf and blind Australians are forgotten because the cinema industry refuses to meet needs for captioning and audio description.

The protests were run by the community group Action on Cinema Access.



TAKING A STAND: Protesting outside Village Cinemas in Hobart yesterday over the lack of captions at cinemas were, from left, Inez Bryan and Rebecca Moir, both of Risdon Vale, and Naomi Rogers, of Brighton. Picture: NIKKI DAVIS-JONES

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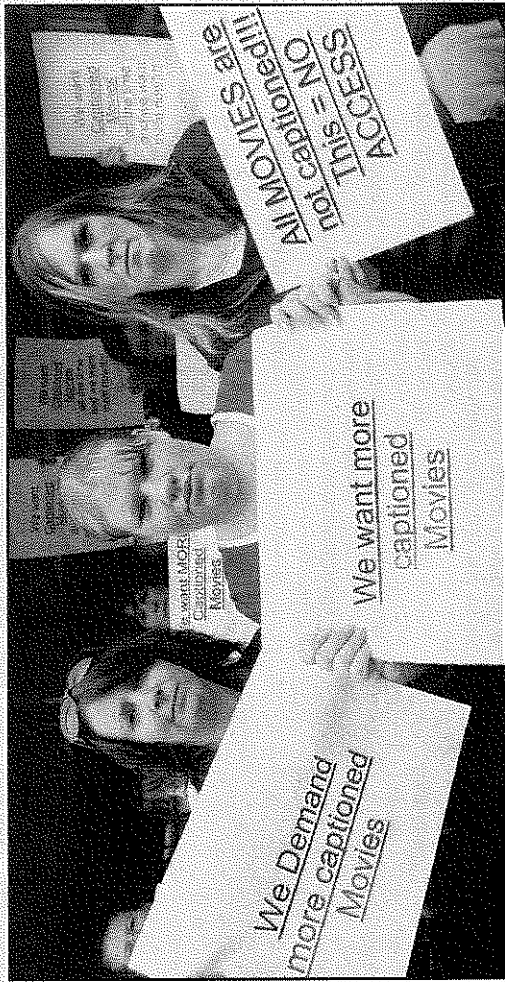
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